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Rep. David Cheatham
Rep. Thomas Knollman
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Sen. John Waterman
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Sen. Connie Sipes
Sen. Glenn Howard
Sen. Timothy Skinner



INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON MISSING CHILDREN

LSA Staff:

K.C. Norwalk, Attorney for the Committee
David Lusan, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

Authority: P.L. 96-2007 (Established by HEA 1726-2007)

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 31, 2007
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 404
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 5

Members Present: Rep. Dennis Avery, Chairperson; Rep. David Cheatham; Rep. Thomas Knollman; Rep. Suzanne Crouch; Sen. Vaneta Becker, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. John Waterman; Sen. Michael Delph; Sen. Connie Sipes; Sen. Glenn Howard.

Members Absent: Rep. Carolene Mays; Rep. Jackie Walorski; Sen. Timothy Skinner.

Call to Order

Representative Dennis Avery, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:20 PM and the members of the Committee introduced themselves.

Clarissa Snapp and David Woodward, Indiana State Department of Education

Ms. Snapp and Mr. Woodward presented the Committee with the following documents and DVD:

- "Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy" (Exhibit 1)

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

- "Sessions Provided at the School Safety Specialist Academy since 2003" (Exhibit 2)
- "25 Ways to Make Kids Safer" (Exhibit 3)

Mr. Woodward explained to the Committee that a child abduction is a crime that takes place in two locations; where the child is abducted and where the child is taken. While child abductions affect a very small number of people, the Department of Education is promoting the Kid Escape program, which teaches children how to avoid being abducted. Kid Escape training includes teaching children to do the following if someone tries to abduct them:

- (1) make a lot of noise to cause a scene; and
- (2) be physical in a manner that makes it difficult for an abductor to abduct a child.

Ms. Snapp also explained this training is demonstrated in Kid Escape! from Child Abductors, a DVD that was given to each Committee member.

Proposed Legislation

In 9-0 roll call votes, the Committee approved the following legislative drafts:

PD 3228 (Twenty-first century scholars with GED diplomas)

Provides that a student who would otherwise qualify for a twenty-first century scholarship is not disqualified as a scholarship recipient if the student has: (1) withdrawn from school due to financial hardship, illness, or a court order; and (2) obtained a general educational development diploma.

PD 3255 (Sibling Visitation for Foster Youth)

Requires the department of child services (DCS) to promote sibling visitation for every child who receives foster care. Allows a sibling to request sibling visitation if one of the siblings is receiving foster care. Requires DCS to allow sibling visitation if it is in the best interests of the child receiving foster care. Provides that if DCS denies a request for sibling visitation, an individual may petition a juvenile court for sibling visitation. Requires a court to grant sibling visitation if the court determines sibling visitation is in the best interests of the child who receives foster care. Permits a court to appoint a guardian ad litem or court appointed special advocate if a child requesting sibling visitation is receiving foster care. Provides that a guardian ad litem or court appointed special advocate appointed in a sibling visitation case is immune from civil liability, except for gross misconduct.

PD 3398 (Homeless and Foster Care Education)

Requires each school corporation to: (1) appoint a liaison for homeless children (liaison); and (2) report to the department of education (department) the contact information for the liaison. Requires the department to train new liaisons. Requires each school corporation that has an Internet web site to publish on the web site the contact information for the liaison. Relocates a chapter of the Indiana Code concerning the transportation of homeless students to a new article concerning homeless children. Requires a school corporation to transport a student in foster care to and from the school in which the student was enrolled before receiving foster care. Requires each school corporation to provide tutoring for a child who is in foster care or who is homeless, if the school corporation determines the child has a demonstrated need for tutoring.

PD 3382 (Homelessness)

Requires the Indiana housing and community development authority (authority) to: (1) oversee and encourage a regional homeless delivery system; (2) facilitate the dissemination of information to assist individuals and families with accessing local resources, programs, and services related to homelessness, housing, and community development; and (3) determine the number of homeless individuals, including homeless children, in Indiana, and the number of homeless in Indiana who are residents of Indiana. Extends the authority's power to coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and social services program to include individuals or families facing or experiencing homelessness. Provides that an individual who is at least 16 and less than 18 years of age or an unattached youth may receive shelter and services or items directly related to providing shelter for homeless or low income individuals without the approval of a parent, guardian, or custodian. Provides that an emergency shelter or shelter care facility is not required to notify an emancipated minor's parent, guardian, or custodian if the emancipated minor receives or attempts to receive any services from an emergency shelter, a shelter care facility, or a homeless person or low income program. Provides that an emergency shelter or shelter care facility that receives a runaway child shall: (1) notify the child's parent, guardian, or custodian of the child's location not later than 72 hours after receiving the child; and (2) notify the department of child services if the child alleges that the child is the subject of abuse or neglect.

Final Report

Legislative Services Agency Staff Attorney K.C. Norwalk presented a draft of the final report to the Committee.

The Committee approved the following recommendations and finding in a voice vote:

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly provide adequate funding for Safe Place programs to expand to each county in Indiana, subject to available resources.

The Committee finds that every child has the right to safe harbor.

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly provide funding to support the expansion of shelters for runaway youth and homeless persons in Indiana, subject to available resources.

The Committee approved the final report in a 9-0 roll call vote.

Adjournment

Representative Avery adjourned the meeting at 2:30 PM.